

June 21, 2004

Martin Wolf, in Memory [Gene Ralph]

Martin Wolf, avid proponent of the use of solar energy and noted researcher and developer of photovoltaic devices, passed away on May 20, 2004. He leaves behind his loving wife Ann, and children, Dorothy, Tom, Michael, and Margret. Martin was well liked by all those who knew him. Martin was a splendid leader and mentor, and could analyze and summarize complex issues with great success. The IEEE Cherry Committee sends sincere condolences to his family, along with appreciation for all he achieved.

Martin received the Vordiplom and Diplom Physiker degrees from Georg August University, Goettingen, Germany in 1948 and 1952 respectively. He moved to Chicago, Illinois in 1952, and became a U.S. citizen.

Following experience as Project Engineer in UHF circuit development for the Admiral Corporation from 1952 to 1955, he was a Section Manager in semiconductor device development in the Semiconductor Division of Hoffman Electronics Corporation from 1955 to 1961. He was one of the founders and General Manager of the Heliotek Division of Textron Electronics from 1961 to 1965. From 1965 to 1970 he was Manager of the Physical Research Laboratory of the RCA AstroElectronics Division.

In 1970 he joined the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia and served as Professor of Electrical Engineering and Science. He directed research on the development of solar-energy utilization methods, with emphasis on low cost terrestrial photovoltaics. He built an active department with many graduates. On retirement in 1993 he was created an Emeritus Professor.

Martin made significant contributions in the development and application of photovoltaic solar energy converters, particularly in the area of analysis and efficiency improvement of silicon solar cells. Other technical activities included development of diodes and power rectifiers, visible and infrared solid state sensors and image sensor arrays and thin-film hybrid circuits.

He contributed 80 technical papers, many regarded as classics. One of his first papers in 1955, co-authored with Morton Prince, won the Marconi Award of the British IRE. He gave numerous presentations at conferences and meetings, both in the USA and internationally. He held five patents.

In 1982 he received the William R. Cherry Award. Martin was a Fellow of the IEEE, and Associate Fellow of the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics. He was a member of the American Physical Society, the Electrochemical Society, the Solar Energy Society and the American Management Association.

Martin served in many capacities in the IEEE Photovoltaic Specialists Conference, as an original organizer, as General Chairman in 1972, and he was an active member of the W.R.Cherry Committee.

He served on almost all of the government advisory committees, task groups and panels organized to provide guidance and direction for the photovoltaic field. He also served on various committees of professional, industrial and university associations. He will be truly missed.

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